SUGGESTIONS

FOR RENDERING THE

INCLOSURE

OF

COMMON FIELDS AND WASTE LANDS

A

SOURCE

OF

POPULATION AND RICHES.

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MISCELLANEOUS

PAMPHLETS

ON

LONDON:

FAMILY AND GENERAL SUBSCRIPTION REGISTRY;

OR,

EASY SUBSCRIPTIONS

FOR

CONSOLS, FIELDS AND MUSIC FUNDS,

AND

RAILWAY SHARES.

SUGGESTIONS

FOR

INCREASING THE SUBSCRIPTION

TO

SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

INTRODUCTION

AN attempt to throw new lights upon a ſubject of ſo much national importance as the preſent, may probably draw an imputation upon the author of either ſelf-intereſt or preſumption; nor is this the only difficulty he apprehends he muſt encounter: various, and indeed almoſt innumerable, have been the publications on the ſubject; whether they have been, in ſome inſtances, the reſult of patriotic ſentiment and mature experience, or in others have been made the vehicles of prejudice, is not the preſent object of enquiry. It is the deſign of the author of the following ſheets, as far as lies within the ſcope of his abilities, to ſeparate fallacy from truth, and to confine himſelf ſtrictly to an enquiry into the cauſes of the ill ſucceſs which, for a ſeries of years, has attended the incloſure of common fields and waſte lands; to correct

abuſes; to point out the means of preventing them in future; and to ſubmit to the public eye, *Suggeſtions for rendering the Incloſure of Common Fields and Waſte Lands a Source of Population and Riches.*

The author appeals only to the candid and impartial; for, although he means to attempt a refutation of the arguments moſt prevalent againſt incloſures, his preſumption has never extended to the idea of his being able to remove prejudices deeply rooted.

The flattering reception a generous public have been pleaſed to beſtow upon "An Eſſay "on Agriculture," publiſhed by the author in the laſt year, has emboldened him to this undertaking; and under an impreſſion ſo inſpiring, he proceeds to ſtate the following as the chief objects of preſent animadverſion.

Firſt, *The general ſtate and management of common fields.*

And, ſecondly, *A brief deſcription of the management of incloſures.*

As various arguments are daily uſed againſt the incloſure of common fields and waſte lands, the author deſigns to comment upon,

and

and attempt to confute, ſuch as come immediately within his knowledge; and theſe are:

1ſt, That the quantity of arable land is diminiſhed, and that of paſture increaſed, in conſequence of incloſure.

2dly, That population is injured by incloſure.

3dly, That grain is of a better quality in a common field than in an incloſure.

4thly, That incloſures are frequently cauſes of emigration.

5thly, That ſmall farmers are greatly injured, and the yeomanry of the country almoſt annihilated by incloſure.

6thly, That the prices of proviſions are increaſed in conſequence of incloſure.

7thly, That wool, the ſtaple commodity of the kingdom, is injured by incloſure.

8thly, That if it were granted, that incloſure would be more productive than common fields, an increaſe of the produce of the country would have no market. And,

9thly, That the incloſure of commons and waſte lands, is pernicious to ſociety.

The author concludes by ſhewing, that the generality of incloſures, for thirty years paſt, have been miſmanaged; and propoſes a plan for the incloſure of common fields and waſte lands, ſo as to render them a ſource of population and riches.

SUG-

SUGGESTIONS, &c.

Of the general ſtate and management of common field lands.

IT muſt be admitted there are but very few pariſhes (generally ſpeaking) conſidered as totally unincloſed, or in an open-field ſtate, which have not a cluſter of ſmall pieces of incloſure near, or adjoining to, the farm-houſes in thoſe reſpective pariſhes, by way of homeſtead, or ſtowages, for cattle employed in the cultivation of the land; or which are not applied to the purpoſes of ſhelter, and for the conveniency of foddering cattle and ſheep in inclement ſeaſons; ſo abſolutely neceſſary are ſuch incloſures conſidered, and no doubt they were ſo conſidered in the very

early progreſs of agriculture, for at this day there is ſcarce an inſtance where ſuch inclo-ſures are not continued.

Upon a general view of the common fields throughout this kingdom, and contemplating the extreme mixture and remote ſituations of the property therein, it is reaſonable to believe that, in the firſt ſtate of their cultivation, ploughing up a piece of ground was conſidered as an adventurous undertaking; when actual poſſeſſion conſtituted the moſt eſſential part of the title to landed property, the occupant neareſt to this ſuppoſed adventurer no doubt availed himſelf of his neighbour's experiment in cultivation, and conſequently began to practiſe upon the neareſt part of the ſoil to that where ſuch experiment had been made.

This idea, though ſome may think it chimerical, appears to me the moſt probable way of accounting for the extreme mixture and inconvenient ſituation of the greateſt part of the landed property in moſt common fields; from which it is evident, that no regular plan was thought of, or at leaſt ever adopted, in laying out thoſe fields; for it would be abſurd

to ſuppoſe, that landed property was thus mixed by experienced cultivators.

When agriculture had made ſome ſmall progreſs, and lands were let to farm, the cultivators of the ſoil began to find the neceſſity of having a regular annual ſupply from their occupations, to anſwer the demands of the returning ſeaſon; and then the plan for dividing the whole of the arable lands into three parts was firſt ſuggeſted; one-third part of which was annually fallowed and ſubdivided into two equal parts; one to be folded with ſheep, and ſowed with wheat; and the other part dunged and ſowed with barley; or, according to the preſent practice in many places, one part to be folded with ſheep for a barley crop, and the other dunged and ſowed with wheat. In the ſpring following, oats were ſowed upon the wheat ſtubbles, and peas, or beans, or a mixture of both, upon the barley ſtubbles; after which crops the land was fallowed again, and that part which, after the previous fallow, was folded with ſheep, and ſowed with wheat, was then dunged, and ſowed with barley, or *vice verſâ*; ſo that the ſoil received the ſame kind of ma-

nure, and was cropped with the ſame kind of grain only every ſixth year.

I would by no means be underſtood to ſay, that all open field land has been, or is now, managed according to this mode of cultivation; but it is the mode generally adopted upon all clayey or heavy ſoils, and the generality of ſtrong loams in many counties in England; and where this ſyſtem is not generally uſed on ſuch land, I will venture to ſay, a worſe is moſt commonly ſubſtituted for it.

This ſyſtem is moſt departed from upon light loams, or ſandy ſoils, where, for want of a regular plan, which can only be brought about by an incloſure, ſuch ſoils are generally very weak, poor, and foul, for this evident reaſon, that they will not bear to be kept too much under the plough, and to receive the quick repetitions of crops, which generally fall to their ſhare, but ſtand in need of being laid down with graſs-ſeed, for two or three years, in a courſe of huſbandry; which mode of management is incompatible with open and common field farming; for though it might appear reaſonable to ſay, if three-fourths of the occupiers would agree to alter

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the ſyſtem of management of a common field, to cultivate the land in a ſimilar manner, and to lay down equal portions thereof, according to the quantity each reſpectively occupies, &c. where would be the neceſſity for an incloſure?

Though this is begging the queſtion, I would in a great degree grant its effect, if practicable; but how are thoſe three-fourths of the occupiers to be inſpired with the ſame ideas of management? or how are many of them to be poſſeſſed of property ſufficient to enable them to carry the newly-adopted ſcheme into execution? And though it might be ſaid, that the preſent ſyſtem, which I allude to, as almoſt univerſally practiſed in common fields, was not enforced by act of parliament, it has been eſtabliſhed by long cuſtom; and at this diſtance of time it is impoſſible to ſay what difficulties were experienced in effecting it; but the probability lies in favour of the idea that it was a long time before it arrived at the perfection in which we find it; for before a ſyſtem ſo copious could have been eſtabliſhed, every occupier muſt have felt the ſame impulſe; and it is

well known, that the jarring intereſts of the occupiers of a large common field muſt always have rendered it extremely difficult to introduce reformations; for inſtance, the man poſſeſſed of a farm he approves, and expects to continue in, and who might be deſirous of altering the courſes of huſbandry, by laying down part of his land, or otherwiſe, for the ſake of future advantages to be derived to him in reſpect of ſuch proceedings, differs eſſentially from him who means to leave his farm, and purſue preſent advantages only. A number of ſimilar arguments might be adduced: notwithſtanding the glaring inconveniencies which the occupiers of ſuch common field farms experience, they ultimately fall upon the proprietors of the land, as a tenant cannot pay ſo much rent under diſadvantages, as he can under contrary circumſtances. Whole pariſhes, which are now, and have been for ages paſt, in the poſſeſſion of one and the ſame family, or in the hands of very few proprietors (whereby the difficulty of conſulting a multitude is completely obviated), either from the indolence of the proprietors, or from a blindneſs to their own

intereſt,

intereſt, remain as mixed as when the lands belonging to the reſpective farms within ſuch pariſhes were probably the property of fifty perſons: under ſuch circumſtances, an exchange of lands amongſt the occupiers, ſo that their farms might be laid out in larger pieces, or more contiguous than before, would be an improvement, which farmers, who underſtand their own intereſt, would gladly come into; and yet even this plan is ſeldom adopted, although it would moſt certainly anſwer in all caſes, where it might not be adviſeable to incloſe *.

The inconveniencies attendant on the occupation of a common field farm are almoſt innumerable; the moſt glaring I ſhall venture to point out, and arrange in the following order.

1ſt, That even where the ſoil is adapted to the cultivation of turnips and artificial graſſes, and where the occupiers are tempted to alter the mode of cultivation, an excluſive

* Vide an act of the thirteenth year of his Majeſty's reign, for the better Cultivation, Improvement, and Regulation of the common Arable Fields, Waſtes, and Commons of Paſture, in this kingdom.

right

right to any particular ſpot, without the conſent of three-fourths of the occupiers and cottagers, for longer than the ſeaſon in which the corn is growing, cannot be maintained; and without the conſent of that portion of the occupiers, it would be impoſſible to derive any advantage from a crop of clover, artificial graſſes, or turnips, upon a fallow; becauſe the ſupport of a flock of folding ſheep is principally dependant upon the fallow lands, and commons intermixed therewith; wherefore any number with one-fourth of the diſſentient occupiers could prevent any part of the fallow field being taken in for ſuch purpoſes; ſo that in effect, under that circumſtance, all the fallow lands muſt be common; and the fencing in ſo many ſmall ſpots, in a temporary manner, in caſe the plan might be adopted by three-fourths of a pariſh (which would be found abſolutely neceſſary in applying ſuch turnips, clover, or artificial graſſes, to the moſt profitable uſes) would be a work of great expence and difficulty, on account of the general ſcarcity of hedging and other wood on common field farms.

With

With every deference and reſpect for the good intentions of the honourable baronet *, who was the principal mover for the act of parliament which paſſed in the thirteenth year of the reign of his preſent Majeſty, for the better Cultivation, Improvement, and Regulation of the common Arable Fields, Waſtes, and Commons of Paſture, in this Kingdom, I muſt obſerve, that the operation of the bill has been extremely limited †; and it has not, either in ſubſtance or effect, in any conſiderable degree, liberated landed property from the ſhackles of partnerſhip. Loaded as the tenures are, in common field ſituations, with the fetters of a number of different intereſts meeting in one point, the partners in the ſoil are ſtimulated by various immediate views, while each party wants ſufficient

* Sir William Dolben.

† Although the author has had conſiderable experience in managing and letting large tracts of open common fields in ſeveral counties, he never knew an inſtance where either proprietors or occupiers moved for, or even mentioned, the advantages to be derived from this act of parliament; and he ſhould have remained in ignorance of it, if he had not received a hint from his well-informed friend, Mr. Harriſon, of Daventry.

power

power over his own property to enable him to purſue his direct intereſt; and this variety of intereſts may, and does, frequently proceed from the different qualities of the ſoil, and its different condition; ſo that the occupiers are like travellers on different roads to the ſame place of deſtination: but when the whole becomes liberated by incloſure, and ſeverally laid out, all the occupiers real intereſts will terminate in the attainment of the great object of general good.

The mode of managing common fields, as pointed out in the bill, is the moſt eligible that can be deviſed, and it is a lamentable inſtance of ſupineneſs, that it has not been enforced in all poſſible caſes; a ſmall improvement muſt be undoubtedly better than total neglect, and it might be productive of good, if the act of parliament alluded to, was to be recommended to the magiſtrates to be read at every general quarter ſeſſions, for the ſpace of one year. There is, however, one clauſe in the act, which, in its operation, would be very detrimental to the breeding of ſheep; this is, that rams ſhall not remain in the open common fields from Auguſt 25, to

Nov.

Nov. 25; becauſe it is certainly clear, that if rams are not put to the ewes before Nov. 25, the lambs will be produced too late to be of ſufficient age and ſtrength to bear driving from place to place for the purpoſe of obtaining food for the ewes, and to be folded with them in the ſucceeding ſummer; as in that caſe the evil would be, that the lambs would become ſtunted; and where it is a practice to ſheer lambs, their fleeces, under this diſadvantage, would not be ſufficiently grown for the uſes of the manufacturer, or for the tender bodies of the lambs to thrive afterwards. For theſe, and many other reaſons, it would be adviſable for the rams to be turned to the ewes before the 25th of Nov. or for the meaſure to be left open to the determination of the majority of the occupiers.

2dly, The inconvenience, delay, conſequent expence and trouble in ſhifting teams and labourers from one ſpot to another continually; in ploughing, manuring, and all the buſineſs of an open field farm, where it is no uncommon thing to ſee a tenant ſhifting his teams, &c. from, and to, the moſt remote

parts

parts of ſome hundred acres for every different land he occupies.

3dly, The mortification the beſt of farmers frequently experience in an open field ſituation, from the miſmanagement of occupiers of contiguous lands, who ſuffer every ſpecies of weeds the ſoil is infeſted with, to ſeed and diſſeminate as ſpontaneouſly as on the moſt barren heaths or commons; ſo that whatever expence the good farmer has been at, in preparing his fallows, and weeding his crops, the end of his labour is in a great meaſure defeated by the plentiful production of thiſtles and other noxious weeds on neighbouring lands.

4thly, The loſs of manure ſuſtained by payment of tithes in *kind*, which cuſtom moſtly prevails in common fields, and indeed in many old incloſures alſo; however, the experience of late years has induced the promoters of moſt modern incloſures to make fair compromiſes with the clergy and other impropriators of tythes, by ſetting out a proportionable allotment of land for them in lieu thereof.

5thly,

5thly, That one part of a farm is ſacrificed to the good of another upon almoſt all cold land; that is to ſay, no profit is derived to the farmer from the commons on which the ſheep are grazed (ſave the manure from the folding of them), the wool and increaſe, at one time, being only ſufficient to anſwer the loſſes at another, occaſioned by the rot, ſcab, and other contingent misfortunes to which ſheep kept in common fields are more than all others liable, from being neceſſarily in a cold ſituation when releaſed from their fold, and in a warm one when confined there. Add to this, that when they are let out of the fold, they greedily ſwallow any herbage they firſt meet with, and after haſty falls of rain in the ſummer ſeaſon, a watery graſs is forced up, which theſe ſheep eagerly devour, whereby whole flocks are frequently loſt.

It alſo too often happens, that one negligent farmer's ſuffering his ſheep to contract the ſcab, unavoidably communicates the evil to all the flocks in a common field.

6thly, That in conſequence of grazing the commons with ſheep (which bite very near

the roots of the grafs), thoſe commons loſe all the benefit of manure, as ſuch animals are driven to drop their excrements upon the arable land; ſheep commons are therefore frequently very poor, and produce very little wholeſome nouriſhment for the ſtock depaſturing thereon, and of courſe very little uſeful manure for the fold.

7thly, From the mixture of ſtock, which muſt neceſſarily happen in a common field, a farmer is in a great meaſure deprived of the means of improving his breed of cattle; there not being a poſſibility of ſeparating thoſe of different ages and ſorts; beſides, in ſuch ſituations, where clover, turnips, and artificial graſſes, are not produced, nor much good hay, cattle are but indifferently wintered; and, as commons are generally poor and overſtocked, it would be next to an impoſſibility to effect any material improvement in the breed of cattle in an open field farm.

I muſt here remark a very material diſadvantage in the occupation of a common field farm, which is extremely well underſtood by practical huſbandmen, *viz.*

That

That on account of the extreme mixture of land, and its general distance from a farmer's habitation, it is almoſt impracticable for the teams to go more than one journey *per* day at plough, otherwiſe the day would be chiefly ſpent in going to, and returning from, the work; and on that account, where only one journey *per* day can be performed, the teams are kept out too many hours to admit of very young horſes at the work, and thoſe which are thus employed are obliged to be chiefly fed and maintained upon corn; ſo that a conſiderable part of the produce of a common field farm, or what is called the breach crop, or the crop of oats and beans (which ſucceed wheat and barley), is eaten up by the horſes employed in the cultivation of the land; among the many diſadvantages of this procedure, the moſt ſtriking are, that by the neceſſity of full-aged horſes at the work, the benefit to be derived from keeping an improving ſtock of horſes, which I have recommended in my "Eſſay on Agriculture," muſt be loſt. And that by ſuch demand for corn for working horſes, the land is made to produce oats, which is detrimental to a farmer's intereſt,

where his principal objects are the preservation and improvement of a farm; for it must be allowed, that the land, which thus produces oats, would be best applied to the production of clover, or other artificial grasses.

8thly, A very great mischief is attendant on common field farming, which arises from the mixture of property, as to watercourses; in a furlong, field or tract of land, it often happens, that some of the farmers, through indolence, obstinacy, or private pique, neglect to cut or clear out water-courses through their particular lands, in which case others are much injured, by having the water thrown back upon them; and though such conduct is reprehensible, yet, for the sake of peace, and from an aversion to litigation, an injury of this kind is often submitted to. In common situations it often happens, that there is a brook, or rivulet, dividing parishes, or otherwise running through the open fields, the courses of which are frequently very irregular; it is no doubt necessary to keep such courses always clean and open, and in cases where parochial boundaries are not interfered with, it might be advisable to cut them straight;

ſtraight; but whether ſuch buſineſs centers with the inhabitants of one pariſh only, or affects thoſe of another, the number of perſons who muſt neceſſarily be conſulted on the occaſion is too frequently the cauſe of this buſineſs being thus neglected; and the conſequence is, that thoſe brooks, or rivulets, upon a haſty fall of rain are overflowed, from which circumſtance the rot of ſheep is generally contracted.

9thly, The greateſt diſadvantage a common field farmer labours under, is, the general neceſſity for fallowing one-third part of his arable land every year; in conſequence of which, two years rent, and every attendant expence, muſt be charged on each acre of wheat and barley upon his farm; therefore each crop of wheat and barley muſt be equal in value to at leaſt ſix times the annual rent of the land (after deducting the price of the ſeed), or the farmer cannot be maintained; which, for the ſake of elucidation, may be thus calculated.

1ſt, Two years rent to the landlord.

2dly, Two years rent for the maintenance of a farmer's family.

3dly, Two years rent for wear and tear, and the incidental expences of cultivation, poor-rates, &c. without charging one farthing to the account of intereſt of a farmer's capital loſſes in his ſtock, or for the rent of the commons; a conſiderable part of the benefit derived from which commons is by an open field farmer (as before obſerved) generally ſacrificed for manure for the crops of wheat. The crops of oats, beans, and peas, which generally ſucceed the crops of wheat and barley, are for the moſt part ſmall; this may in many inſtances be attributed to the too quick ſucceſſions of the ſame kinds of grain, even where the thinneſs of the ſtaple, and poverty of the ſoil, are not the moſt material impediments.

Therefore, on account of one-third of a common field farm remaining in a ſtate of fallow, and conſequently unproductive every year, as well as by reaſon of other heavy expences heretofore pointed out, the land muſt be rented proportionably low; and larger quantities of land muſt remain in fewer hands than would be the caſe if the local advantages, of which the ſoil might be capable, were to

be

be improved by an incloſure; which would enable an occupier to cultivate his land to the greateſt advantage poſſible, and to inſure himſelf the beſt-bred ſtock thereon; it being evident, that a farm of two hundred acres of incloſed land, properly attended to, is capable of raiſing ſtock of all kinds, both in more abundance, and of infinitely better quality, than three hundred acres of the ſame ſort of ſoil in a common field ſtate; for it is moſt certainly true, that upon a farm where the local diſadvantages are great, the ſoil is frequently poor, and makes but a ſmall return for ſeed, manure, and labour; a farmer muſt therefore occupy a larger quantity of this land, for the ſame degree of benefit, than he would be able to ſecure to himſelf from a leſs quantity of the ſame, which, if incloſed, would afford a more liberal return for the ſame degree of labour and expence.

An incloſed farm, managed to the greateſt advantage it is capable of, whatever the ſoil may be, brings an annual crop; and, in the inſtance of clover, very often two crops in a year. A fallow is never neceſſary, except as a preparation for turnips, coleſeed, and cab-

 bages;

bages; and where turnips, clover, coleſeed, and cabbages, are produced, an incloſure never requires folding with ſheep, if an occupier takes care to cultivate his land properly by hoeing, weeding, and interweaving meliorating crops with his crops of grain; following a courſe of huſbandry moſt ſuitable to the ſoil, keeping off the too quick ſucceſſion of the ſame kinds of grain, and laying the land down with artificial graſſes as they come in courſe, an incloſure may be kept in high cultivation, for a ſeries of years, without its being tired of any one ſpecies of grain or herbage. A farmer, having an incloſure of different ſoils, may apply each to its right uſe. By following the mode of cultivation for which each ſoil is beſt adapted, or laying particular parts down for perpetual paſture, he can uninterruptedly improve his breed of cattle, according to his inclination or abilities. He is unfettered, and at liberty to follow up the improvements in the ſcience wherein he is engaged, which is now eſtabliſhed and aſcertained by practical experiments; from which conduct alone, agriculture may be enabled to keep pace with manufactures and com-

commerce; and it is a truth well known to thoſe perſons perfectly acquainted with practical huſbandry in ſeveral counties in England, that improvements in agriculture by no means keep pace with thoſe in manufactures and commerce: a probable cauſe of which is, that an open field farmer is either totally inattentive to improvements of this nature, or ſhould he be, or pretend to be, an advocate for them, his hands are in a great meaſure tied behind him; he is, nevertheleſs, ſo bigotted to the ancient mode of field farming, that, was an incloſure of the lands in his pariſh to take place, he would look out for another open field ſituation, rather than ſubject himſelf to deviate in the leaſt from the beaten track of his anceſtors for the means of ſubſiſtence. The conſequence is, a perfect ſtranger to both the nature and properties of the deſerted ſoil frequently ſucceeds; and his inexperience in thoſe eſſential particulars probably occaſions him up-hill work for ſome years, and, at a time when the product of the land is cheap, too often a failure. This, no doubt, proves a matter of temporary exultation to the open field bigot; but, when ſuch diſad-

disadvantages are withheld, experience favours the adventurer's assiduity, and repays him four-fold for his commendable exertions.

I now enter upon an answer to the first objection in my list against the inclosure of common fields, *viz.*

That the quantity of arable land is diminished, and the quantity of pasture land is increased, in consequence of inclosures.

In almost innumerable instances where inclosures have taken place (and indeed the like instances must happen in future), parts of the soil, which had been continually in an arable state, being found best adapted for pasture, have been applied to that use; on the other hand, pasture land has, with similar views of improvement, been applied to the purposes of arable cultivation; the object of an inclosure being generally to enable the possessors to apply the soil to its right use, which they were unable to do in a common field state. How far success has usually accompanied such views shall be the subject of future enquiry; but it would be absurd to conclude, that, because a common field is inclosed, it should have a direct tendency to become pasture

land; or that the proprietor ſhould have ſuch a view materially in contemplation, becauſe it is well known, and generally admitted, that the moſt profitable ſoil to incloſe is a ſandy or light loam, where the cultivation of turnips, clover, and other artificial graſſes, can be effected with certain ſucceſs. Which ſoil being applied to ſuch uſes, may alſo anſwer the purpoſes of grazing; for from the production of turnips, clover, and other artificial graſſes, abundance of food for ſtock is produced, which generally furniſhes a great quantity of rich manure for the arable land; ſo that the buſineſs of farming and grazing together are much more advantageouſly purſued than either can be to any great extent, without the other.

Such a ſoil will not anſwer the purpoſe of perpetual paſture any more than ſtrong, thin-ſtapled clays: indeed the generality of high land is not adapted for continual paſture; and the cultivator, who attempts to make paſture land where the herbage intended to be ſowed upon it will not flouriſh, nor perhaps exiſt, will of courſe buy his experience at a dear rate.

If

If all the land in the kingdom of Great-Britain was to be encloſed, and cultivated to the greateſt advantage it is capable of, it is reaſonable to conclude, the quantity of land, in a ſtate of perpetual paſture, would not be thereby increaſed; inaſmuch as it muſt neceſſarily happen, that a very conſiderable quantity of the land, which now is in a ſtate of paſture, muſt be broke up, and applied to the purpoſes of cultivation: beſides, in this country, a medium will neceſſarily be kept up between the value of corn and cattle; and though, from circumſtances dependent in a great degree upon commerce, for a ſeaſon or two either the value of corn or cattle may preponderate; yet in the average of twenty years they are, and always will be, equal.

An occupier of a farm, having it in his power either to lay down his land with graſs ſeeds, or continue it in corn, will, when the value of corn exceeds the proportionable value of cattle, as ſoon as poſſible apply his land to the production of corn; and, *vice verſâ*, as to cattle.

And

And where an occupier rents a farm under ſtipulated covenants between him and his landlord, as to the quantity of land he ſhall at any time continue under the plough or otherwiſe, an alteration of the ſyſtem would be allowed by the landlord, provided the permanent value of his eſtate ſhould not be diminiſhed by the change.

The ſecond objection to incloſure, and what has been generally urged with much ſtreſs, is, that population is injured thereby.

In order to take the moſt comprehenſive view of this ſubject, it will be neceſſary to have reference to the moſt unincloſed counties with regard to the number of inhabitants, and the purpoſes in agriculture wherein they are employed.

The occupation of a common field farm is generally managed by ſervants hired into a farmer's houſe; and the neceſſity of this is, that the labour attendant on the farm is early and late; young men, immediately under a farmer's eye in his houſe, who are unincumbered with any connexions abroad, are preferred; ſuch is the practice, and ſuch the reaſon generally and truly aſſigned for the

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meaſure. As there are no quickſets to plaſh, weed, or mould up, trees to preſerve, wheat, peas, or beans, to drill, or in many ſituations no conſiderable quantity of turnips or beans to hoe; labourers on theſe acounts are unneceſſary, and the chief employment of the labourers in common field ſituations (except only in time of harveſt) is to thraſh out the farmer's grain; which buſineſs being accompliſhed, as the ſummer advances, and until harveſt returns, they have but little or no employment. In ſome counties, particularly in Cambridgeſhire, Huntingdonſhire, ſome parts of Northamptonſhire, and other counties, as hay harveſt advances, the labourers proceed down to the fen counties to take mowing (and indeed it is not unuſual for labourers to come out of ſome of the northern counties by ſea for that purpoſe), where many of them end their miſerable exiſtence, or return with a lingering ague, to be nurſed at the expence of the reſpective pariſhes to which they belong. Whether the poor rates are increaſed by this procedure, thoſe who feel moſt ſenſibly the effects can beſt deſcribe. And if the farmers in the moſt uninclоſed

counties

counties in England, where there are no manufactories, could get no farther assistance during their harvest than from their own inhabitants, their grain would frequently be spoiled in their fields before they could get it home: they are therefore dependent upon both the friendly aid of our brethren of a sister kingdom, and the manufacturers of this, for assistance to get in their harvest: it is therefore surely a fair inference, that the little employment, usually found for labourers in an open field is the cause of their parishes being less populous than those where inclosures prevail; for it is an established fact, that several parts of this kingdom, the most cultivated in corn, and most inclosed, are so very populous, that the harvest can be got in without any extraordinary aid. Every possible advantage may be derived from the inclosure of a soil well adapted to the purpose, with the farms laid out in different sizes; enabling men of small capitals, as well as of large, to become occupiers; and in such situations the breed of cattle is attended to; labourers are employed in hoeing turnips and beans, drilling wheat, peas, and beans; cutting, plashing, and ma-

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naging quicks; land-draining, and various other avocations, not much followed in a common field. Beſides, in the circumſtance of drilling*, children from five years old and upwards are uſefully employed the moſt conſiderable part of the year; and the employment of more labourers in an incloſure, than in a common field ſituation, is abundantly compenſated for, as by keeping the land clean, and in a high ſtate of cultivation, it will produce an annual crop, a circumſtance unknown in the generality of common fields.

The rev. Mr. Howlett, in his late publication on this ſubject, has taken conſiderable trouble to inveſtigate it; but I cannot help remarking, that his procuring returns of baptiſms, and militia recruits, from recently incloſed pariſhes, with a view to aſcertain whether population has increaſed or diminiſhed, or upon a general principle to determine whether incloſures tend to promote the good of this kingdom, is very likely to prove erroneous: nor is it the teſt which a ſubject, pregnant with ſo much good or evil, as the

* Vide "Eſſay on Agriculture," for the author's opinion of improvements in mechanics, when applied to the ſcience of agriculture.

inclosure of commons and waste lands with respect to the community, demands.

I conceive, that the mode of investigation which this gentleman has adopted, with a view to clear up the point, may probably involve the question farther in error; for instance, if it should be proved that the soils of the respective parishes, from which his returns of population, since their inclosures, were made, are not properly cultivated, or applied to the purposes for which they are best adapted (and it is not unreasonable to conclude, that such may the case), no allowance being made by Mr. Howlett on this account, nor in fact any notice taken of it by him in his calculations; and it being highly probable, from the general bad management of late inclosures, that some of the soils of the parishes, from which the returns were made to Mr. Howlett, may be applied to the production of corn, whilst they are best adapted for pasture; in this case the returns of the increased number of inhabitants would be too large; while, on the other hand, if any considerable parts of those parishes are applied to pasture, which are better adapted for corn,

his returns of population would be too ſmall to form a fair and deciſive opinion upon; for, in making up the mind of a ſenſible inveſtigator of this ſubject with regard to the evil or good tendency of incloſures, he muſt conſider, not ſo much the preſent circumſtances of the caſe, as the future conſequences; becauſe, if it ſhould be found, that agriculture is not arrived at the higheſt ſtate of perfection in this kingdom (of which, in my own mind, I am perfectly clear), and that the generality of incloſures are miſmanaged, let the cultivation of the ſoils be improved, and let us avail ourſelves of the local advantages to be derived from incloſures, and the concluſions drawn therefrom upon the preſent queſtion will be true and deciſive: in ſhort, the beſt ground on which to determine the queſtion, is, a due conſideration of the innumerable diſadvantages to which the occupier of an open or common field farm is liable; the little money to be ſpared for manual labour, or the ſlender produce from common or waſte land, to individuals, as well as to the community, in compariſon with the profits to be derived from the ſame ſoils, when all ſuch inconveniencies

conveniencies and disadvantages are removed by means of inclosure; when the cultivation of the land is improved to the utmost degree, and whilst it yields abundance to enable the occupier to discharge every obligation upon himself, and to vend such abundance at a moderate price; upon which it may seem too obvious to remark, that a better cultivation of our land will very much conduce to the increase of population, and the cheapness of the necessaries of life.

3dly, That grain is of a better quality in an open field than in an inclosure.

I admit, that in open situations, where grain has a free circulation of air through it, it is better than in more confined ones where that benefit, so essential to its health, is denied; but it is equally clear, that there is only a certain length to which this argument will go; and when as much air is produced amongst the corn as is necessary for its health, more would be superabundant.

Small inclosures, in flat situations, surrounded with a great number of trees and quicks, grown to a considerable height, certainly prevent the essential circulation of air,

and the crops of grain are often much the worſe on that account; nevertheleſs, in ſuch ſituations, although the land is let at an advanced rent, ſuch rent is frequently paid with much more punctuality than that of an open-field farm. Many ſuch ſituations occur to my recollection; and all men converſant with the different counties know, although perhaps many may be unwilling to acknowledge, the remark to be true. But incloſures happen to be made in different ſituations and ſizes, according to circumſtances, and of courſe land has been laid out differently; ſome in large pieces, ſome in ſmaller; and, when the quicks have grown up to a proper height for fences, they are commonly cut down, laid, and kept conſtantly ſo low as to be of little or no detriment to neighbouring vegetation.

Others have thought it more adviſable to let the quicks grow up to a greater height, and to cut them down at a certain number of years growth, in ſucceſſion, conſidering the quick an uſeful and profitable crop. Whoever finds an inconvenience from the want of a free circulation of air, on account of the height

height of the quicks, has always, or ought to have, a power to cut them down; and if their growth ſhould be, in any caſe, conſidered as a deprivation of health to the crops, no ſenſible or conſiderate landlord would object to having them kept conſtantly clipped low.

An objection to the growth of timber in the incloſures might be urged upon the ſame principle; but ſuch arguments have more plauſibility than real force in them; and I will venture to aſſert, that in different parts of England, where the lands are divided into the ſmalleſt incloſures, quicked, and well timbered, the rentals are the higheſt, moſt permanently fixed, and moſt punctually paid.

The objection thus made to incloſures, on account of the grain being ſuppoſed to be of a worſe quality there than in open fields, is in general fallacious, and bears no proportion to the innumerable advantages derivable from incloſures judiciouſly managed.

4thly, That incloſures are frequent cauſes of emigration.

Whoever draws a general concluſion, that the incloſure of common fields in any pariſh

is the cauſe of the emigration of its inhabitants, from the miſcarriage of a few incloſures within their knowledge, or even from the ill ſucceſs with which too many of the incloſures, that have taken place within the laſt ſixty years, have been attended, is over haſty in his concluſions. Such perſons ſhould conſider, that the incloſure of common fields will be proved to be attended with good or bad conſequences to the community, in proportion to the good or bad management which is adopted on the occaſion.

I admit, that within my own knowledge ſome inſtances have occurred, where incloſures have taken place, of the ſmalleſt or moſt inconſiderable farmers, labourers, and mechanics, having emigrated from ſuch pariſhes, and retired to others not incloſed; and that the lands of ſuch incloſed pariſhes have been let to fewer occupiers than before, and applied chiefly to the purpoſes of grazing; but a conſequence no leſs true has followed, which is, that the views of neither the proprietors, nor occupiers, have been anſwered; and that, in nine inſtances in ten, poverty to the tenants, and diſappointment to the landlords,

lords, have been the reſult: which has, in moſt caſes, been attributed to the needineſs or miſmanagement of tenants, in not cultivating and preparing their land properly before they converted it to paſture, a want of ſkill in their ſelection of proper graſs ſeeds adapted to the ſoil, and too great an eagerneſs to mow them before their ground was thoroughly well ſwerded; ſo that I conceive myſelf well juſtified in ſaying, I never found ſufficient reaſon to condemn the incloſure of common fields, upon a general principle; nor ſhould I in the particular inſtance I allude to, had they been duly managed.

Even where an incloſure ſhould be ſet on foot, under every circumſtance of good management, it would not be very ſurpriſing, if the lower claſs of inhabitants were to emigrate, from having ſeen the ill ſucceſs, and I might add the fatal conſequences (ariſing wholly from miſmanagement), with which the incloſure of many common fields have been attended of late years; and from a kind of innate prejudice, always ſubſiſting in their breaſts, againſt every innovation in ancient privileges and cuſtoms, though others might

be propoſed in their ſtead more advantageous: yet doubtleſs, when the good effects of ſuch a meaſure begin to ſhine forth through the cloud of prejudice, there can be no fear of their not returning to the ſpot.

5thly, That the lower claſs of farmers have been injured, and the yeomanry of the country almoſt annihilated, by incloſures.

It muſt be admitted, that where, in conſequence of incloſure, the number of farms has been reduced, and the land let out in larger farms, it has been productive of raiſing the rents of ſmall farms in unincloſed pariſhes, and thereby diſpoſſeſſing the moſt uſeful ſet of men in the community; and indeed raiſing the rents of ſmall farms in unincloſed ſituations has been attended with the ſame conſequences, as to the annihilation of the ſmall farmer; becauſe thoſe farmers, poſſeſſed of only ſmall capitals, have been tempted to hire their farms at more rent than they ought to pay, and to undertake the cultivation of a larger tract of land than they had the means of occupying to its full advantage, which has, in a ſlower degree, produced their deſtruction.

And

And we now ſee, that, in almoſt every common-field pariſh, the number of farmers has been conſiderably reduced within twenty or thirty years. But to other cauſes muſt be aſcribed the general prevalency of this circumſtance; for it is impoſſible ſo much evil can be fairly attributed to the miſmanaged incloſure of a few pariſhes.

At preſent, the number of incloſures, which have taken place within the laſt ſixty years, bears but a ſmall proportion to the quantity of land in this kingdom, which either now remains open, or has been incloſed time immemorial.

I cannot admit that in any incloſure, fairly and judiciouſly made, the property of the ſmall proprietor, or of the cottager, can be injured. On the contrary, I ſhould rather believe, that as the rights of the ſmaller individual have too frequently been invaded and trampled upon by the larger, ſo is the property of the ſmall occupier of a common field moſt likely to be eaten up, and rendered of but little value, particularly with reſpect to his common right; which miſchief is prevented upon an incloſure, where a barrier is

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ſet up againſt incroachments of this nature.

And thoſe, who through prejudice are induced to ſay, that upon an incloſure the ſmaller proprietor cannot pay his quota towards the expence, without mortgaging and incumbering himſelf, and that often with the larger proprietors, who ultimately lay hold of the whole property, go very far indeed; for it reaſonably ſhould be allowed, that in proportion to every man's property, ſo ought to be his circumſtances to improve and preſerve it; and if, where incloſures are honeſtly and judiciouſly made, the ſmall proprietors reap a ſhare of the general advantages, it is but reaſonable to charge them with proportionable expences.

While the manufactures and commerce of Great-Britain were advancing to the perfection they attained at the commencement of the laſt war, a ſpirit of enterpriſe diffuſed itſelf through all ranks and degrees of men. The huſbandman felt it in his turn; it has been a common circumſtance, in counties where a ſpirit for improvement in agriculture firſt broke forth, that the yeomanry,

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or perſons poſſeſſed of ſmall eſtates in their own occupations, have been induced to ſell them, to purchaſe a ſtock ſufficient to improve larger tracts of land, the property of other perſons, which they have hired upon improving leaſes.

Therefore, from the improvements which have been already made, it is difficult to ſay, which is the moſt independent claſs of people; or whether, amongſt manufacturers and thoſe in the mercantile line, men may not be found as eminently diſtinguiſhed for their ſervices and conſequence to the ſtate, as our ancient yeomanry ever were.

The principal cauſe of the reduction of the number of ſmall farmers has been the inattention which the generality of gentlemen of landed property have, for many years paſt, paid to their own real intereſts. They have purſued the fallacious idea of reducing the number of buildings on their reſpective eſtates, with a view to contract their expences; by which meaſure they have reduced the number of their farms, and conſequently the number of perſons capable of becoming good tenants; and their eſtates have, in innumerable inſtances,

ſtances, neceſſarily fallen into the hands of thoſe who are incapable, in point of property, of managing them to the greateſt advantage.

6thly, That, in conſequence of incloſures, the prices of proviſions have increaſed.

Whoever candidly takes into conſideration the quick and eaſy communication all parts of England have with the metropolis, the increaſed magnitude of that city, the perfection to which our manufactures have been carried within the laſt ſixty years, the luxury of every degree of inhabitants, and the conſequent increaſe of population, will not long be at a loſs to account for the increaſed price of proviſions, without charging much to the account of a few incloſures, injudiciouſly managed; whilſt it is clear, to the conviction of every man of candour, who is acquainted with practical huſbandry, and has lately travelled through the different parts of Great-Britain, that agriculture, in point of improvement, has not kept pace with manufactures and commerce; a great deal of this delay muſt be charged to the ſcore of an advance of rents in the preſent age, without a general attention to the binding the occupiers

to improve the property committed to their management, and to preſerve it in tenantable condition; or to gentlemen of landed property not inviting them, by example, to ſuch improvements as might be compatible with each particular ſoil and ſituation. Inſtead of which, it is now a general practice, and more eſpecially upon the major part of new incloſures, for occupiers to hold more land than they are enabled, in point of property, to ſtock and manage to the greateſt advantage; and, in conſequence thereof, they are induced to purſue their immediate intereſt only, by neglecting the advantages to be derived from improving the breed of cattle, and the repeated cropping of the land, without looking forward to its future condition; and to the farms being leſs productive, and many ſeeming trifles neglected, may be truly attributed a part of the cauſes of the preſent high price of proviſions.

Many gentlemen of landed property do not rightly eſtimate the real advantages to be derived from their eſtates: they are generally content if their rents are punctually paid; and whilſt they have no view towards the imme-

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diate advance of them, the landlord and tenant go on very ſmoothly; and where eſtates are let at much leſs than their real value, very few incidental loſſes are ſuſtained by the proprietor, and of courſe very few difficulties are created: but where farms are let to their full value, needy adventurers, or injudicious occupiers, ſometimes get hold of them, reduce the condition of the land, and leave it for the proprietor to try his ſkill upon for a few years; yet moſt aſſuredly every gentleman of landed property, who is a well-wiſher to his family, and to his country, whether he lets his land dear, or cheap, is ſo far intereſted in the cultivation of his eſtate, as to deſire that its product ſhould be the largeſt, and moſt valuable, it is capable of bearing; for as agriculture is the great foundation upon which manufactures, commerce, and every good, is to be ſuſtained, the more abundant product of the land muſt go towards the reduction of the price of labour, and manufactured goods, the rates for the maintenance of the poor, and in an innumerable number of indirect channels towards the reduction of the land tax; and although the rent of a farm ſhall

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remain exactly the ſame as when the reſpective land upon which it is charged was leſs productive; yet, as the increaſe of the produce of it will be the means of reducing the price of labour, manufactured goods, and many expences ultimately charged upon the land, the proprietor's money will go the farther at market, and thoſe advantages will operate upon the proprietors, the tenants, and the community, as an enrichment of the whole. A due attention to theſe hints I muſt recommend as the way to produce riches and proſperity to this country; and yet agriculture does not make the ſmalleſt part of the education of modern gentlemen, not even of thoſe who ought to be moſt concerned for its ſucceſs.

There is not a more common circumſtance in England, than that upon a gentleman's arrival from his travels, and coming into poſſeſſion of extenſive landed property, he ſhould be totally ignorant of its condition, and utterly unable to inform himſelf, from his own obſervations, whether the ready money put into his hands is made by honeſt ſavings from an eſtate improved and preſerved, or whether it

has not been hoarded in a napkin, in delay of neceſſary repairs and improvements, from which ſeven-fold advantages might have been reaped. The time is not far diſtant, when gentlemen of landed property will feel the neceſſity of paying more attention than at preſent to this great ſource of national ſtrength.

The Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, in the Adelphi, however laudable their deſigns, will be incapable of making ſo rapid a progreſs in improvements as the country ſtands in need of, unleſs they are ſupported by the united efforts of all gentlemen of landed property; and to bring agriculture to the higheſt ſtate of perfection it is capable of, ſocieties muſt be formed by the gentlemen of each reſpective county, to encourage it by premiums for different claſſes of improvements in farming and the breeding of cattle.

I have lately peruſed a pamphlet, intituled, "A Political Enquiry into the Conſequences "of encloſing Waſte Land, &c. &c. by a "Society of Farmers in ——ſhire." I will not comment on the unhandſome attack upon

upon Mr. Lampert's publication; but confine myſelf to that part which relates to the preſent ſubject. An attempt is made to prove (chiefly by bold aſſertions), that if incloſures are proceeded farther upon, the price of butcher's meat will be at the rate of nine pence or ten pence *per* pound; and that it is in conſequence of ſome incloſures having taken place in this kingdom, that butcher's meat is now proportionably dearer than corn. The only ſeeming argument adduced in ſupport of this doctrine is, that by incloſing commons, foreſts, or waſte lands, which in ſuch ſtate are chiefly uſed as nurſeries for the breeding and maintaining of cattle and ſheep, and for which advantages little or no rent is paid by the cottagers, and the occupiers of contiguous farms, the means of raiſing large quantities of young cattle and ſheep are in a great degree loſt; for when ſuch lands are allotted into farms, and a rent is put upon them, it is generally too high to admit of breeding ſuch cattle and ſheep, or at any rate to afford the maintenance of them till they are four or five years old, which is the age this ſociety ſeem moſt to approve, in order to

produce them *in perfection.* The authors endeavour to clear up their point by a calculation of the difference between the expence of keeping a ſheep upon land of a pound *per* acre, and keeping one of the *ſame quality* upon a common for which the proprietor of the ſheep pays no rent.

I believe, I have ſtated the chief ſubſtance of the pamphlet; and, indeed, if it had not been uſhered forth under the fair colour of proceeding from a ſociety of farmers, I ſhould have paſſed it over without making any comment upon it; but knowing the importance of the ſubject, and at the ſame time how likely gentlemen are to be miſled by profeſſors of practical huſbandry, when they are not well acquainted with it themſelves, and yet feel how eſſential a knowledge of it is, to enable them to decide properly upon the preſent queſtion, I could not refrain from offering a few obſervations, which occurred to me upon an inſpection of this anonymous publication. With regard to the matter in queſtion, it is extremely clear that cattle may be raiſed more cheaply upon a common which bears no rent, than the ſame ſort of cattle

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can be raiſed upon the ſame land when it is incloſed, and a rent is put upon it before any improvements take place. But the ſociety have made no allowances for thoſe improvements which are extremely practicable in the breed of cattle and ſheep, both as to their weight, number, and value; when a common, heath, foreſt, or waſte land, is incloſed, and cultivated to the beſt advantage, no calculation is made by the ingenious gentlemen upon the extreme produce of the land in corn, fodder, hay, clover, turnips, cabbages, and cole-ſeed, in lieu of barren heath, or poor and overſtocked commons; for theſe gentlemen cannot help admitting, that at the ſeaſon of the year when the farmer of lands contiguous to a common turns out his ſtock upon it, ſuch commons are for the moſt part overſtocked; the conſequence of which to the cottagers I have already endeavoured to point out; and which are, briefly, that at the only ſeaſon of the year when a cottager can derive any advantages from a right of common, that is, from May to Auguſt, ſuch commons are eaten up by the farmers of con-

tiguous lands: here I muſt refer to the poſition adopted by the ſociety, *viz.*

"That it is not the *plenty* or *ſcarcity* which "makes an article dear for a long continuance "of time, becauſe the price depends on the "neceſſary charges and expences in the pro-"duction of it." The argument adopted by the ſociety to elucidate this poſition, is, that the "*little*" the cattle get to ſuſtain them upon commons is not paid for, and therefore the owners can afford to ſell them cheaper than if they had paid for their food, either by the way of rent of land, or by any other means.

If we conſider all the land of this kingdom as a common ſtock, for the ſupport of the community, as, no doubt, generally ſpeaking, it is; it is no leſs true, that whatever parts are beſt cultivated, and moſt fruitful, contribute moſt to general advantage; and, by parity of reaſoning, thoſe parts which are uncultivated, and conſequently leaſt productive, contribute leaſt to general utility: gentlemen, who are poſſeſſed of common rights annexed to their eſtates, do not often find it worth while to put any rent upon them,

them, and therefore common rights have but little, if any, rent paid for them, as being generally overſtocked, and in moiſt ſituations they ſtand in need of draining (for what is every perſon's buſineſs to perform is generally left undone); and, from every ſpecies of neglect in their cultivation, are commonly unproductive; not ſo much from the nature of the ſoils, as from the mode of uſing them. And when we conſider the diminutive carcaſes, and of courſe the little value, of ſheep that barely get a ſubſiſtence upon ſuch commons, and by being thus badly kept become ſtunted and unthrifty in their natures; what value can be put upon a common only applied to their maintenance? But the ſociety are pleaſed to remark, that if, "from whatever cauſe it "happens, ſheep ſupported upon a common "are deſtroyed, no one is a loſer by it, as "they are bred and maintained upon land "which bears no rent." The ſociety ſeem to ground this notion upon a calculation of the expence of producing neat cattle and ſheep upon incloſed land, which is charged with the payment of rent; but it is obvious, that ſuch charge of rent is urged as a conſi-

deration for the expences attendant upon the incloſure, and other local advantages; and though in many inſtances ſhort-ſighted proprietors ſtrain rents in ſuch ſituations much too high, they are themſelves ultimately the greateſt loſers; therefore ſuch inſtances cannot be adduced even as auxiliary to the forming of a general concluſion, that incloſures are detrimental to the kingdom. It cannot be denied, that when a common, for which no rent has been paid, is brought into a ſtate of cultivation which the ſoil may be beſt adapted for, and cattle are produced of a more heavy and thrifty nature, that ſuch ſoil is more valuable to the occupier, than it was before the incloſure took place; and therefore the proprietor ought to reap a fair ſhare of ſuch enrichment; or, on the other hand, ſhould any particular common, upon which cattle have been depaſtured, upon an incloſure be applied to the production of corn, I muſt again obſerve, that the more the country is cultivated, and the more the different ſoils are applied to the uſes for which they are beſt adapted, the more regular will be the parity between the value of corn and cattle;

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for this evident reaſon, that, when ſuch improvements take place, land will not be continued in paſture which is better adapted for ploughing, nor will land be continued in an arable ſtate which is better adapted for paſture; and whenever the value of cattle ſhall for any conſiderable time exceed the proportionable value of corn (as I have had occaſion before to remark), occupiers of arable land will cultivate artificial graſſes for the purpoſes of paſture, on which they will breed and maintain ſheep and neat cattle.

As to the expence of managing incloſures, will any one ſay, that when land is highly cultivated, and made to produce ſeven-fold more than when it was in a ſtate of common, it will not require more hands to cultivate it, and be more capable of bearing a ſhare of the national burthens, maintain more inhabitants, and ſecure to the occupiers the ample means of paying incidental expences, as to rent and charges, whilſt the commodities produced are thus more abundant, and are brought to market at a moderate price. I am inclined to believe, that in a great degree the preſent high price of

butcher's meat may be truly attributed to the uncultivated condition of commons and waſte lands throughout the kingdom, and the general diſregard to the breed of cattle. When the ſociety remark, that no one is a ſufferer by the loſs of ſheep upon commons, becauſe the land upon which they are maintained bears no rent, they cannot but recollect, that the community is intereſted in the loſs of ſuch animals; for whatever numbers are deſtroyed, and not brought to market, are ſo many in diminution of the general ſtock by which the community is to be ſupported; conſequently the ſupply muſt be the leſs, and the commodity the dearer; in ſhort, the community is deeply intereſted that every acre of land in this kingdom ſhould be cultivated, and made to produce the moſt it is capable of; and it would be too hardy in any one to ſay, that the expence of cultivating our land would not be abundantly repaid by the production of corn and cattle; for if the argument the ſociety ſeem chiefly to reſt upon, *viz.* "It is not the plenty, or ſcarcity, which "makes an article dear for any long conti-"nuance of time, becauſe the price depends

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" on the neceſſary charges and expences in " the production of it," *has any weight, it muſt be allowed to be as applicable to the lands already incloſed as it is to ſuch lands of the ſame original quality, which are now in a waſte, or open ſtate; and thus the language of the ſociety appears in plain Engliſh to be, leave off the cultivation and improvement of your land; if it is leſs productive than it otherwiſe would be, your expences will be the leſs. The ſociety not having fixed upon any certain quantity of land which is neceſſary for the inhabitants of this kingdom to keep in cultivation; and if they had ſo done, they would ſtill want the power of governing the condition and management of the land; and alſo the ſeaſons, to make the product of the ſoil regular and certain.* When we conſider all the land in the kingdom as a common ſtock, for the ſupport of the community, it will appear contrary to one of the favourite arguments of the ſociety, " That " the cottager's ſheep (as alluded to in the " calculation) are maintained at a greater ex- " pence than the farmer's," becauſe for want of due cultivation of the common upon which it is maintained, it occupies a larger

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ſpace for its ſupport than would be requiſite upon the ſame ſoil when better cultivated; making no allowance for the caſualties ſheep are moſt liable to, which are ſupported upon commons, and their degenerate ſort and poor condition. Upon an incloſure, where ſheep are raiſed in a thrifty ſtate, they will very nearly attain perfection at two years old, and a conſiderable advantage muſt be derived from the quickneſs of the breeders and graziers return; and though the ſociety lament on this account the diminution of the quantity of wool, on account of killing ſheep ſo young, ſuch pretended loſs will never be felt in this kingdom; for I can truly ſay, that Engliſh wool never was a much greater drug than it now is; and after a little time, when the breed of ſheep ſhall be duly improved, the wool will be ſtronger, heavier, and finer, than it generally is at this time. In oppoſition to the arguments of the ſociety as to the expence of raiſing a commodity being the criterion of its price, it muſt appear, *that wool never was produced at a greater expence than it is at the preſent time, and yet it was never cheaper*. The remedy for this evil will be

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the incloſing and cultivating our lands with more ſkill and induſtry, increaſing, and thereby cheapening, the means of ſupport for the manufacturer, and reducing the price of labour. By theſe means the woolen trade will again flouriſh; and if the quantity of wool produced in this kingdom was to be for a ſhort time a little leſs (which I am not clear would be the caſe under the circumſtances alluded to), ſuch temporary reduction of the quantity of wool cannot be ſet in competition with the advantages to be derived from increaſing the value of the animal, and more eſpecially whilſt wool abounds; but in the caſe of diminiſhing the general quantity of wool, by reducing the quantity of wethers, the quantity of lamb-hogs and their wool would be increaſed, which is the ſort moſt eſteemed by the manufacturers of this country; beſides, it might ſtimulate the breeder to purſue the means of improving his ſheep: and when I propoſe the killing of ſheep at two years old, I am not recommending ſuch mutton to the epicure, but to the labourer and manufacturer, who regard not the age,

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but are content, provided they can purchaſe it cheap and wholeſome.

The argument made uſe of by the ſociety in defence of raiſing ſheep on commons, *viz.* "That they can ſhift their ground from hill "to valley, in order to preſerve themſelves "from the rot, &c." is extremely futile; becauſe it is well known, that two-thirds of the convertible commons in this kingdom are in flat ſituations, as if ſuch land was rejected by the firſt incloſers or cultivators on account of their wet ſituations; and when the ſociety advance, that ſheep will quit a good paſture for a bad one, I hope they do not mean to inſinuate, that they will ſtay as long upon bad land as upon good; and that ſheep having it at their option to take either, will do no more upon the bad paſture than rove over it, and pick out a little of the beſt herbage. The weight of cattle and ſheep bred upon land when incloſed, if duly managed, will abundantly exceed thoſe bred and maintained upon commons; and they will poſſeſs an advantage from being better reared and maintained (if choſen with tolerable ſkill) in a manner unknown amongſt common field ſtock, and will

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come to perfection much ſooner than thoſe bred upon a common; ſo that of ſheep, a return may be made from the butcher at two years old; and that of a neat beaſt of the female kind at three years old, when it will produce a calf. Good land, or, in other words, land which bears a great rent, may be profitably applied to the purpoſes of breeding ſheep and cattle, but they muſt not be of that ſort which this ſociety have made their calculations upon; they muſt be of an improving ſort; *and in proportion to the goodneſs of the land, when properly ſtocked, will the numbers, or weight, of cattle and ſheep be increaſed.* I muſt confeſs, that improvements in the breed of cattle and ſheep have made but a very ſlow progreſs, not having been carried into effect in more than three or four counties; nevertheleſs the neceſſity of it muſt be every day more apparent; attention will ſoon be generally paid to the reſerved value of cattle, and particularly cows. After the firſt purpoſes to which they are applied, care will be taken in the breeding of them, that they ſhall be the moſt valuable that can be produced, not only for the pail, but for fattening

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when they have attained their utmoſt growth; inſtead of which, I am well aſſured, that three-fourths of the cows of the dairies in England are continued for ſuch purpoſe until their natural death happens. The ſociety I am ſure will agree with me, *that it would influence the price of butcher's meat not a little, if the meaſure was to be adopted of ſelling off or feeding cows, when they arrive at the age of ſeven or eight years, and filling up their places with thoſe of three years old.* There are, and always will remain, large tracts of land uncultivated in England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, which, being applied to the purpoſes of breeding and maintaining cattle and ſheep, will greatly aſſiſt in ſupplying our markets with lean cattle; and for the reſt we muſt make it up by improving the breed of every kind at home. The general diſuſe of oxen in agriculture has been certainly a cauſe of raiſing the price of lean oxen, and indeed it is not ſo pleaſant an animal as an horſe for the uſes of agriculture, it being too heavy and ſlow upon ſtrong land, and abundantly too ſlow upon light ſoils; nevertheleſs it would be pro-

per to encourage the uſe of the ox, eſpecially upon light ſoils, where much treading is beneficial; for three reaſons, firſt, as to its reſerved value for fattening, when turned out from a farmer's uſe; ſecondly, as it would be ſome little aſſiſtance in leſſening the conſumption of oats, as the land which produces them for draught horſes may be applied to the purpoſes of grazing; thirdly, that manual labour would be increaſed thereby, and of courſe population encouraged; becauſe a team of oxen can perform but little more than half as much ploughing *per* day as a team of horſes; conſequently more ploughmen and drivers would be neceſſary; but, upon the whole, in ſpeaking of the intereſt of a farmer, I ſhould conceive, where he keeps an improving ſtock of horſes, that ſuch would be more profitable than oxen. The ſociety in part attribute the high price of butcher's meat to the number of horſes bred and maintained in this kingdom for luxury, and for exportation; judging that the land upon which they are brought up would be more properly applied to the maintenance of neat beaſts and ſheep; and that the land, on which

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the abundant quantity of oats for their ſupport is produced, might be more profitably laid down in paſture; and probably there may be ſome truth in it; but when, on the other hand, we conſider that horſes, maintained as is ſaid for luxurious purpoſes, are the means of inviting gentlemen to purſue their ſports, and travels about the country to circulate their money, it may have but little weight. If it is found that the exportation of horſes increaſes, it will certainly be attended to by the legiſlature, and either a large duty upon them will be enforced, or ſuch exportation will be prohibited; indeed, almoſt every evil ſeems to have its oppoſite good, and it requires a very nice ſhare of judgment to weigh them fairly. But I will be bold to ſay, that if gentlemen of landed property will unite in the purſuit of incloſing and cultivating every acre of ſoil in this kingdom which is capable of it, and of improving the breed of cattle * of all ſorts, proſperity and riches may

* By the advantages to be derived from improving the breed of cattle and ſheep, in attending to that inherent principle in ſome animals, the aptitude to become fat, the quantity

may yet be derived to this country. I cannot refrain from giving it as my opinion, that the principal cauſes of the high price of butcher's meat are, firſt, that manufactures and commerce have been more encouraged than agriculture; ſecondly, an increaſed population and general luxury; and, laſtly, the want of a general incloſure, and the better cultivation of the lands already incloſed.

7thly, That wool, the ſtaple commodity of the kingdom, is injured by incloſure.

It muſt be admitted, that where ſheep are conſtantly bred and maintained the wool will be of different degrees, fine or coarſe, according to the quality of the paſture; and upon incloſed land, where the quality of the herbage is improved by manuring, or the production of artificial graſſes, and (unlike common fields) the land is not overſtocked, wool will be produced of a coarſer ſort than in common fields, where, from the poorneſs

quantity of tallow produced in this kingdom will be greatly increaſed, which will go a great way towards removing the neceſſity of importing large quantities of that article, ſo neceſſary in our manufactories, from Ruſſia, &c. In which commerce the balance of trade is unqueſtionably againſt us.

and ſcantineſs of the herbage, the animal is for the moſt part in a ſtate of ſtarving; yet this evil may be remedied, by due attention in the breeder to the culling of his ſtock, the fattening or ſelling off his ſheep with coarſe fleeces, and preſerving thoſe of the fineſt ſorts of wool; for in every flock of ſheep there are thoſe of very different qualities in their fleeces, notwithſtanding every precaution is taken in chuſing rams with fleeces of deſirable ſorts, and changing them every year, or every two years at fartheſt, which ſhould be done with particular regard to the excellence of the carcaſe; whoever wiſhes for ocular proof of this, may be convinced by calling upon Mr. Bakewell, of Diſhley, in Lincolnſhire, who, when heavy wool bore a good price, produced his ſheep with ſuch fleeces; and now, when heavy wool is cheap, and not much demanded by the manufacturers, he produces it of a fine ſort, which, owing to his mature judgment, is ſuperior in ſtrength and quality to the fine wool that is produced by the animal's being conſtantly poorly kept.

Notwithſtanding this reſource, there will always be found in theſe iſlands large quanti-

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ties of fine wool produced from lands which moſt probably never will be incloſed or improved, ſuch as many heaths and downs in Wales, Scotland, and in different parts of England and Ireland, to anſwer the material purpoſes of the manufacture of fine cloths; but, notwithſtanding ſuch production of fine wool in this kingdom, it has not been found fine enough to manufacture cloth for the backs of many of the growers of Engliſh wool, without a mixture of that imported from Spain. Engliſhmen ſeem to be growing deaf to the voice of reaſon and truth, inaſmuch as but little or no notice is taken of the means of ſalvation, when held out to their view. Far be it from me to preſume, that any hints which may fall from my feeble pen can work the leaſt reformation in this reſpect; but I will venture to aſſert, we have it in our power to grow wool in this kingdom fine enough to manufacture at leaſt as good broad cloths as England could ever boaſt of with all her foreign aids; and I cannot but commend the very laudable efforts of a body of public-ſpirited gentlemen and ladies in Lincolnſhire, who not long ſince

came to the reſolution of wearing no other apparel than ſuch as was manufactured from the wool of their own country; yet this bright, this commendable example, has not been followed by any other claſs of gentry in the kingdom. An example ſo pregnant with every national good (as an encouragement of our ſtaple manufacture muſt be) wants, I would hope, only to be laid in its proper colours before the firſt Perſonages in this kingdom, to ſecure their patronage, which would inſure the moſt heart-felt ſatisfaction to their grateful and loyal people. And were the good effects that might be produced to this nation, from ſleeping in beds manufactured from the wool of our country, once pointed out to an exalted Female Character in a juſt and proper manner, it would no doubt be productive of the moſt ſalutary effects. If the neceſſity of ſuch encouragement is not now ſeen by all the gentlemen of landed property, the inexperienced muſt firſt feel it; as, according to the preſent ſyſtem of things, their lands will be daily falling into their hands much impoveriſhed, and then ſad experience will bring them ſelf-conviction; nevertheleſs,

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it is but reaſonable to hope, that, as our accumulating taxes bear ſo very hard upon the country, every effort will be uſed to improve and preſerve its internal ſtrength and reſources.

8thly, That if it were granted, that incloſures would be more productive than common fields, an increaſe of the produce of the country would have no market.

It muſt be admitted, that if the product of the country was to be increaſed without increaſing population, or opening a new or larger channel for the diſpoſal of the articles of national production, a ſtagnation muſt be the conſequence; but, whilſt ſuch increaſed product is the growth of our own ſoil, population muſt inevitably riſe in conſequence of it; and ſhould the ſoil, by means of a better mode of cultivation, become more productive, and the articles of conſumption be reduced in price, the value of labour would inevitably fall alſo in a certain degree, without reducing the rental of the land, and we ſhould ſhortly be enabled to furniſh foreign markets with all our manufactures on more reaſonable terms than our competitors abroad.

It is for the good of the community, that labourers and artificers ſhould be under the neceſſity of filling up the whole of their time in an induſtrious purſuit of daily ſubſiſtence; as it is too evident, that, if thoſe claſſes of moſt neceſſary people could be ſupported by the exertions of only half their days in labour, the other half would moſt probably be ſpent in idleneſs and debauchery. This may be exemplified by looking into village ale-houſes on a Sunday, which are for the moſt part filled with labourers and mechanics; who, inſtead of attending a place of public worſhip, and applying the whole of their earnings to the ſupport and comfort of their wives and families, indulge in riotous exceſs. This crying evil ſtands foremoſt in the liſt of our public calamities, and calls aloud for the interference of the legiſlature, either to put in force the now-ſubſiſting laws reſpecting the regulation of public-houſes, or to frame others more effectual in their ſtead.

With regard to foreign markets, to take off the ſuperabundant produce of this country, in corn, ſpirits, ſalted meats, ſtarch, or cattle, no reaſonable objection can be made

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againſt their being ſupplied with our ſuperfluities, except in times of war, when it might be perhaps impolitic to feed our enemies, and to fight them afterwards.

With regard to our manufactures, it is the main object of our hopes, that our wool ſhould be demanded for exportation; and why not articles of a more periſhable nature, when the country abounds?

It has often happened in this country, that poverty has worn the face of plenty; and, in conſequence thereof, thoſe intruſted with the regulations of commerce have been deceived: for inſtance, our markets for corn have been glutted between Michaelmas and Chriſtmas, when the neceſſitous farmers have been driven to bring moſt of their grain to market, by which means a very conſiderable part of the produce of the country has either fallen into the hands of ſpeculators and monopolizers, or the ports have been opened for exportation. The Dutch have purchaſed and granaried our corn within their own country, where the intereſt of money is comparatively low, until a ſcarcity has happened here; when our ports have been opened for impor-

tation, and the ſame grain has been returned to us, at a very advanced price.

It has been an argument, conſtantly urged by thoſe who were prejudiced againſt all inclоſures, that the ſmall farmer was always obliged, from neceſſity, to bring his grain to market, whilſt the large farmer hoarded his to produce a ſcarcity.

It muſt be admitted, that either extreme is productive of miſchief; for the country is never ſo well and properly ſupplied as when grain is brought to market upon an average of quantity and price; but the conſequence of the large farmer hoarding or keeping up his grain holds no compariſon with the evil reſulting from the ſmall farmer, out of neceſſity, glutting the markets with his; which either falls into the hands of a few ſpeculators, under the appellation of merchants, to be dealt out with a ſparing hand at an advanced price; or is exported, and afterwards probably returned to us again damaged, and certainly enhanced in price; for whilſt the grain is hoarded in the hands of wealthy farmers in this country, at leaſt the expences of carriage and freight in foreign bottoms are

ſaved, which muſt materially affect the conſumer, in caſe the grain has been exported and returned; beſides, the legiſlature might compel the bringing-out of the grain if an artificial ſcarcity was to be produced in the country by the farmer's hoarding it. And it is certainly attended with much leſs injury to the community, that individuals who expend their grain in our own country ſhould be enriched by holding a balance between the merchant who buys for exportation and the conſumer, than others whoſe views have not the ſame tendency, and whoſe property is not ſo applied.

In bringing agriculture up to the level of manufactures and commerce, probably the wiſdom of the legiſlature will ſo far regulate the price of grain as to fix it at a certain average, lower than which it cannot fall; in which caſe government, by means of proper agents, ſhould become purchaſers, and depoſit it in granaries appointed in various parts of this kingdom for that purpoſe. Surely this would be a far better plan, than opening the ports for exportation when grain is very low in price, which probably may not proceed ſo much

much from the extreme produce, as from the extreme poverty, of the country.

9thly, That the incloſure of commons and waſte lands is pernicious to ſociety.

The incloſure of commons and waſte lands, upon which arable common fields are not dependent, I muſt conſider under two ſeveral heads:

1ſt, Commons as occupied by cottagers, and farmers of incloſed lands contiguous thereto.

2dly, As waſte land, heath, and foreſt, or ſuch upon which the occupation of other lands is not dependent.

With regard to the firſt, it is a notorious truth, that where commons are ſtocked without ſtint, the farmers or occupiers of contiguous incloſed lands generally overſtock them, and particularly with ſheep, the bite of which animal being much nearer the ground than that of a neat beaſt, the cottager's cow is ſtarved; beſides, the cottagers, being generally unprovided with incloſed lands, are deprived of the means of maintaining a cow in the winter, from which circumſtance they are either driven to the neceſſity of diſpoſing

of

of it as the winter approaches (a ſeaſon in which it would doubtleſs be moſt ſerviceable to their families), or muſt be content to ſtock their commons with ſheep, if they have the means of deriving any benefit at all from them; but even this advantage they are too frequently deprived of, for the ſame reaſon which operates with reſpect to their maintaining a cow in winter, moſt commons being but very indifferent layers for ſheep in the winter ſeaſon, as they generally ſtand in need of draining; and, therefore, keeping ſheep is a buſineſs of adventure with the poor cottagers, and ſeldom adopted by them; many of the rich and extenſive commons in Lincolnſhire (which, if incloſed, would let for thirty or forty ſhillings *per* acre, although they are ſubject to the inconveniences I have pointed out) the cottagers generally ſtock with geeſe.

Viewing the ſubject in a true and impartial light, it cannot remain a doubt but that the rights of the cottagers are trampled upon by the occupiers of contiguous lands, who can always ſhift their ſtock upon or from their commons, as beſt ſuits their conveniency.

But

But if every advantage could be derived from commons which the moſt zealous for their continuance can point out, and the cottagers could be ſupported by keeping a few cows and ſheep, its attendant evil would be, that virtuous induſtry would in a certain degree ceaſe, and be ſupplanted by idleneſs. It is by induſtry alone that the lower claſſes of people can be kept virtuous, and riches and population be derived to the country.

Upon the incloſure of a common, the cottager would receive his ſhare of the land contiguous to his cottage, which, inſtead of ſupporting him in a degree of idleneſs, would ſtimulate his induſtry to cultivate it in the production of potatoes, corn, or hemp, or (if extenſive enough) herbage for a cow; which buſineſs, as he will be accuſtomed to induſtrious purſuits, may be carried on at intervals before or after thoſe hours of labour for which he is paid by the neighbouring farmer; a ſituation far more beneficial to him than lounging over two or three thouſand acres to hunt up his cow, his aſs, or his ſheep.

2dly,

2dly, The ſecond head, under which I have propoſed to take into conſideration the ninth objection before ſtated, is, waſte land, heath, and foreſt, or ſuch upon which the occupation of other land is not dependent.

That the community muſt be benefited by the cultivation of lands which at preſent do not contribute their due proportion to the general product of the country, nor bear any material ſhare of the burthen of taxes, cannot be controverted, if the meaſure is ſet about with due caution. A rumour is gone abroad, that it is intended to apply the crown lands to the purpoſes of that kind of cultivation to which they are beſt adapted; the evident advantages to be derived from ſo ſalutary a plan cannot fail of meeting the public approbation; eſpecially as this important taſk appears to proceed with every poſſible circumſpection, and gentlemen of the firſt abilities have been prevailed on to inveſtigate the ſubject.

It has been ſuggeſted, that a ſale of the crown lands to the public will eventually take place; ſhould this be the caſe, no doubt due care will be taken that the market is not overſtocked, and the alienation of private pro-

perty

perty not ſuſpended thereby: and here I cannot help remarking the great advantage the public will derive from the *growing evil* being checked, *of the landed property falling into the hands of a few*, both with reſpect to proprietors and occupiers; but moſt particularly the latter. Since the commencement of the laſt war, farms have been gradually increaſing in ſize, from the failure of the ſmall occupiers; whilſt the means of occupation by the larger have alſo been diminiſhed, to the great injury of private property, and the population and wealth of the community. It is greatly to be hoped, that, if any part of the crown lands ſhould be brought to market, they may be laid out in ſmall parcels, giving all claſſes of his Majeſty's ſubjects a chance of becoming purchaſers, and not be ſuffered to fall into the hands of overgrown individuals, or jobbers in land, whoſe firſt ſtep, generally, in ſimilar concerns, is to cut down all the timber for the purpoſe of ſale, and grind the occupiers and poor dependents. It might be argued, in anſwer to this, that, as ſuch lands are at preſent unoccupied, it would be at the option of individuals, whether they would

would become concerned with ſuch people or not; but it is well known, that mankind are frequently tempted to catch hold of ſpeculative plans, a propenſity which too often leads to their ruin; and from ſuch quarters but little mercy is to be expected.

It is not for me to preſume to recommend a plan for the better managing of the crown lands, ſhould they become the property of individuals; but I muſt humbly ſuggeſt, that, inſtead of a ſale of thoſe lands to private purchaſers, it might be far more advantageous to have them allotted, and laid out in farms of different ſizes, to actual occupiers, on improving leaſes, not aſſignable as in other caſes; to preſerve certain tracts of lands now covered with timber, for the uſe of the navy; and in all circumſtances to make the occupiers covenant to preſerve the growth and production of timber, with all other neceſſary covenants for the improvement of the ſoil, which perſons, well verſed in practical huſbandry, and the knowledge of different ſoils, might ſuggeſt.

This buſineſs, ſo executed, not encouraging a ſort of farmers-general, enjoying enormous

penſions,

penſions, and carving out diſtreſſes for mankind, muſt be productive of much public good.

Particular parts of the land might be brought to ſale, if judged in certain caſes expedient, when the markets would beſt anſwer; and if the officers of his majeſty's navy and army, who deſerve ſo highly of their country, were to have the firſt offers of the occupation of the crown lands, it would not only be a means of retaining them in our country in times of peace, but would be making them ſome recompence for their paſt ſervices. Was this plan to be adopted, I am aware ſuch leaſes muſt be aſſignable when thoſe naval or military occupants were ſummoned to the ſervice of their country; but they might nevertheleſs devolve to others in the ſame line, if a ſufficient number were unemployed in their country's cauſe; and, if not, the farms might be held by proper agents during the abſence of the worthy tenants, as a comfortable and certain retreat after their reſpective ſervices become no longer neceſſary; as the Romans, in a certain æra, were no leſs diſtinguiſhed for their domeſtic

application,

application, than for their military prowefs; ſo might the heroes of our country be alſo diſtinguiſhed.

That incloſures have moſt generally been miſmanaged, may evidently be ſeen by their preſent condition; gentlemen of landed property, having in view by ſuch a meaſure the immediate increaſe of their rentals, have, in many inſtances, haſtily ſet about the buſineſs, without maturely conſidering the nature and properties of the ſoil to be incloſed; ſo that in ſome caſes poor, thin-ſtapled clays have been incloſed, which will not admit of any material alteration from the ancient mode of huſbandry, or by any means anſwer the expences of the buſineſs; in other caſes, the lands have been laid out in very large farms, and let to perſons incompetent to the occupation of them, as well in point of property as in ſkill to apply the ſoil to its right uſe. Want of attention to theſe very material objects in every new incloſure, that the farms be laid out in different ſizes, and each in a ſquare manner, and the buildings placed in as centrical a ſituation as poſſible, has frequently rendered incloſures unprofitable, which would

otherwiſe have turned out highly to the benefit of the proprietors and occupiers, and to the community at large. Where the ſoil is capable of any great improvement, ſo that the occupier will neceſſarily be at conſiderable expence to effect it, he ſhould be indulged with a leaſe, to make his reimburſement as much a certainty as poſſible; the rents ſhould be fixed as I have recommended in my "Eſſay on Agriculture," publiſhed in 1785. And where the ſituation will readily admit of it, lands of different qualities ſhould be allotted together in the ſame farms, by which they will greatly aſſiſt in the improvement of each other.

I now proceed to recommend, that, before any new incloſure is ſet about, the proprietors conſider well whether the ſoil is of a nature to admit of the cultivation of turnips, coleſeed, cabbages, or artificial graſſes; or of being converted into paſture land that will increaſe in goodneſs of quality, the longer it remains in that ſtate. If the ſoil is not poſſeſſed of any of theſe properties, the improvement by means of incloſure is doubtful, conſidering the expences of an act of parliament,

ment, and the other attendant charges. When an incloſure is determined upon, care muſt be taken that the lands are not croſs-cropped, or driven out of heart by ſucceſſive crops, and the manure of the reſpective farms waſted, or miſapplied, previouſly to the incloſure taking place; and that perſons are appointed commiſſioners who will rather prevent enormous and unneceſſary expences, than incur them.

And I ſhould recommend, that farms are laid out in different ſizes, ſimilar to a plan recommended by Mr. Kent; that is, from forty pounds to two hundred pounds *per annum*, making a number of ſmall farms, of different ſizes, which are now rendered abſolutely neceſſary from the general poverty of the farmers, which I cannot but attribute to the great prevalency of letting the lands in too large allotments for many years paſt; whereby farmers in general have, as before obſerved, been induced to take more land than they had property to ſtock and manage to the greateſt advantage, which has reduced their capitals, and rendered a greater number of ſmall farms neceſſary.

The general cuſtom of late years has been to reduce the number of farms in all caſes, as well in unincloſed as other ſituations; which has been the worſt policy that could be deviſed for the intereſts of all who are concerned in them.

If buildings are properly erected, according to the nature and quantity of land to be occupied, it will not coſt above forty *per cent.* more to erect buildings upon three farms of eighty pounds *per annum* each, than on one of two hundred and forty pounds *per annum*; which expence cannot be ſet in competition with the benefits to be derived from having an eſtate occupied to the greateſt advantage, as by ſuch means only the real intereſts of all concerned can be properly purſued.

It would ſurely be adviſable for the legiſlature to repeal the tax upon bricks and tiles, as far as relates to the erection of any buildings upon ſuch new incloſures as may take place under the ſanction of parliament, ſince ſuch buildings muſt evidently promote the population of the country, and the better occupation of the land.

It ought to be a principal conſideration, to diſcover what kind of wood will beſt ſuit the reſpective ſoils, and to cultivate it with all poſſible care.

With regard to the allotment of the cottagers rights upon every new incloſure, it will be adviſable to give them their reſpective ſhares of land contiguous to their dwellings, when their proportionable ſhares are ſmall; but, when they are large enough to admit of it, a field ſhould be incloſed for the ſole benefit of the cottagers, to be enjoyed by them in common, as herbage for their cows; and where there is a large quantity of meadow land in a new incloſure, each cottager ſhould have a proportionable ſhare of it allotted to him, as a proviſion for hay for the ſupport of his cattle in winter, as well as a common-right on the meadow at other ſeaſons of the year. Where there is no ſuch meadow in a new incloſure, and the cottagers allotments are ſufficiently large, about half of their rights ſhould be allotted adjoining to their dwellings, and the other half remain in the common cottagers field. It is the duty of all commiſſioners concerned in incloſures, to guard the rights of

the cottagers from invaſion; for ultimately it is the intereſt of the larger proprietors, that population ſhould increaſe, which can only be materially effected by upholding the lower claſs of people.

It would be adviſable for gentlemen to conſider, whether it would or would not be productive of good, that each cottager's right ſhould not admit of alienation, at leaſt in parcels; but, in caſe of ſale, the whole ſhould be conveyed. Although this reſtriction may not be perfectly conſonant to the ideas of the inhabitants of a free country, I am perſuaded it would, in many inſtances, prevent the cottagers frittering away their eſtates, which is a prevailing practice.

If the few curſory hints I have thrown out ſhould induce others, more competent to the taſk, to take up the inveſtigation of the ſubject, I have every reaſon to expect, and ſhall glory in the reflection, that the reſult will add to the proſperity of this ever fertile, though much uncultivated, country.

F I N I S.

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Stone, Thomas

Suggestions for rendering the inclosure of common fields and waste lands a source of population and riches

London 1787

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